



Australian Government
Department of Education,
Skills and Employment

Modernising the collection of international education data

Concept brief

March 2022



Contents

Introduction	3
Purpose of this document	3
Project background	3
Project scope.....	4
Target users.....	4
Implementation plan	4
Benefits to providers.....	6
Actions for providers and software vendors	8
Stakeholder engagement	8
Consultations	8
Questions	9
Next steps	9

Introduction

The Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) is enhancing the Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) application to make it easier for providers to submit student enrolment data by using the Business to Government (B2G) Application Programming Interface (API) automation. This change will allow providers to integrate their Student Management System (SMS) with the PRISMS application. These changes will reduce double data handling for providers and provide seamless integration of business and government processes.

As the sector is looking to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is expected that this new integration capability will lead to substantial cost savings and business efficiencies for providers. This project will require providers and third-party software vendors to update their systems and software offerings to take advantage of this new integration capability.

The Department is looking forward to working together with a representative group of providers and third-party software vendors through the project's duration to develop and test the new integration capabilities.

Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to inform the international education sector about the upcoming PRISMS modernisation project, in particular the benefits, approach, and implications of using the new capabilities. Furthermore, this document gives an opportunity for the sector to engage and contribute to the project. As such, the project will require the following actions from the sector -

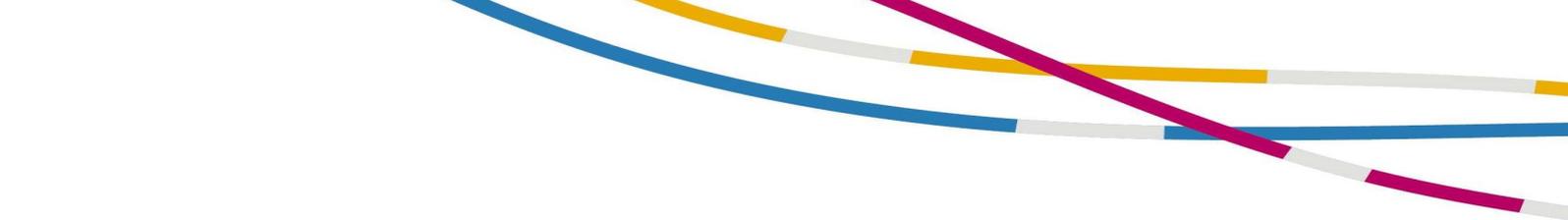
1. Engage with the Department in the project consultation process and implementation. See the [Stakeholder engagement](#) section for details on how to participate in this opportunity.
2. Evaluate and assess the benefits of the project on your organisation to determine cost/benefit propositions.
3. Assess and commit to the project work and resources required to realise the project's benefits to their organisation.

Project background

International education is Australia's largest services export sector and fourth-largest export sector, worth \$37.3 billion to the Australian economy in 2019-20 (ABS cat 5368.0). PRISMS is the application that underpins the management of international enrolments. The student enrolment and course variations data in PRISMS feeds directly into the Department of Home Affairs visa grants, compliance, and investigation processes.

On 17 December 2021, the Hon Ben Morton MP [Minister Assisting the Prime Minister and Cabinet] announced the Australian Government's plan to invest more than \$17 million over two years (2022-2024) to streamline enrolments for international students and Australian education providers as part of the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO).

This project is a key initiative under the Government's Deregulation Agenda. Once implemented it could save the international education sector an estimated \$10 million each year in regulatory



compliance costs. This initiative will support the sector affected by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic by boosting enrolments and Australia's economic growth.

This project will implement a Business to Government (B2G) channel Application Programming Interface (API) for PRISMS, allowing provider software management systems (SMS) to submit data directly to PRISMS and reduce double handling of data. An API would enable data to be entered only once into providers' enrolment systems and directly submitted to PRISMS. The Department will provide API documentation and support material, which will allow the vendors to update software to consume the APIs.

International education providers have advocated for the modernisation of PRISMS, most recently through consultations to inform the development of the new *Australian Strategy for International Education 2021-2030*, as well as through recent direct representations.

Project scope

The project will focus on the most important and high usage PRISMS functions for international students, enrolment creation, and basic reporting of enrolment changes.

The Department also seeks to upgrade PRISMS infrastructure and align it to modern and well-accepted industry standards. The Department intends to apply the B2G solution consistent with other B2G channel API systems and programs implemented within the Department. The API framework will be developed consistent with the National API Design Standard by using established, industry-standard security practices and ensuring a dedicated approach to security and compliance.

Target users

The PRISMS modernisation project will primarily target CRICOS (Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students) providers that are able to invest in enhanced technology and consume these APIs. Other users include application and enrolment service providers, software vendors or education agencies engaged in facilitating enrolment creation for CRICOS providers.

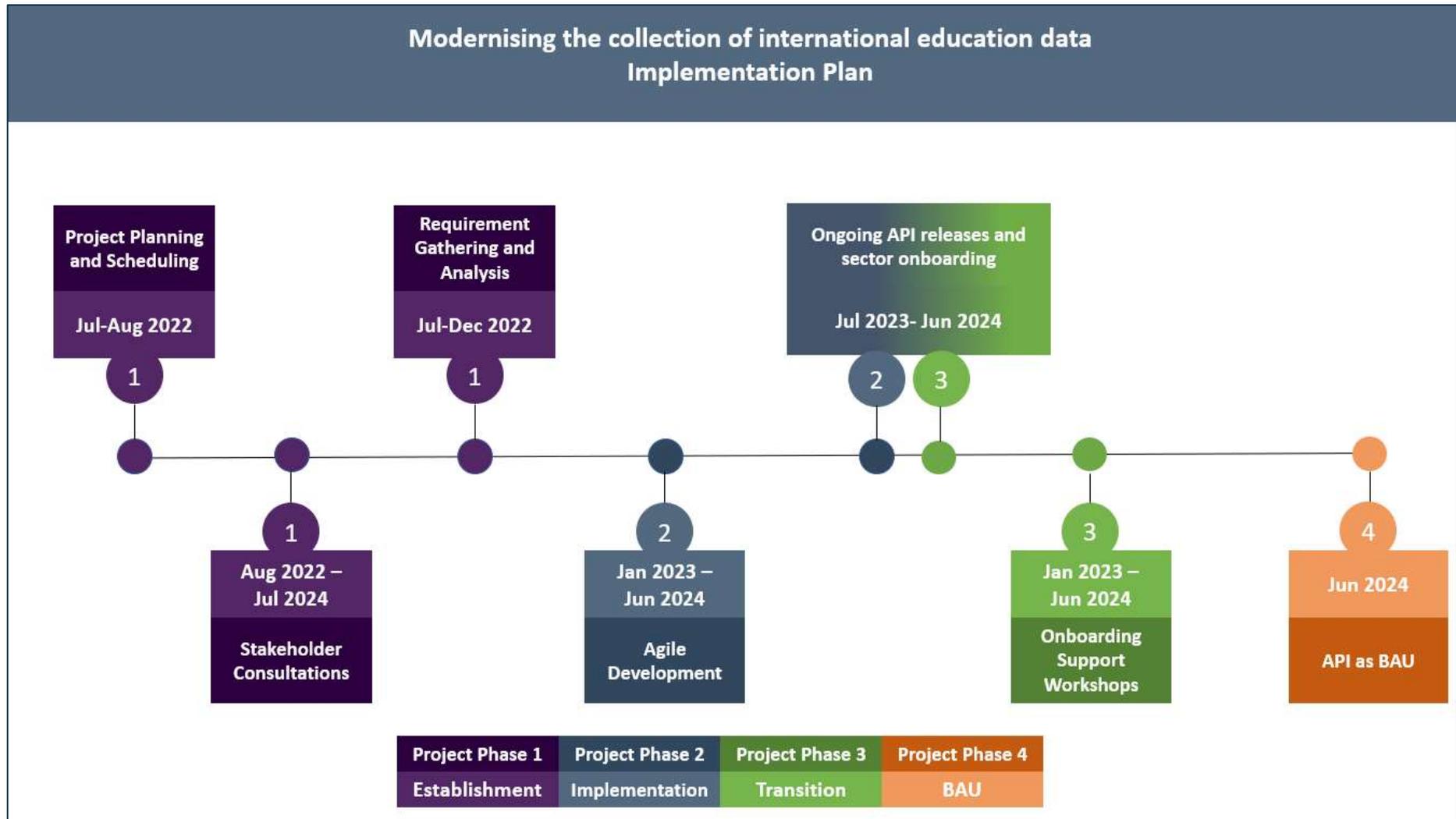
The new API platform will be developed and released in several tranches in a priority order to be determined via sector consultations, while the current PRISMS website remains available to all users.

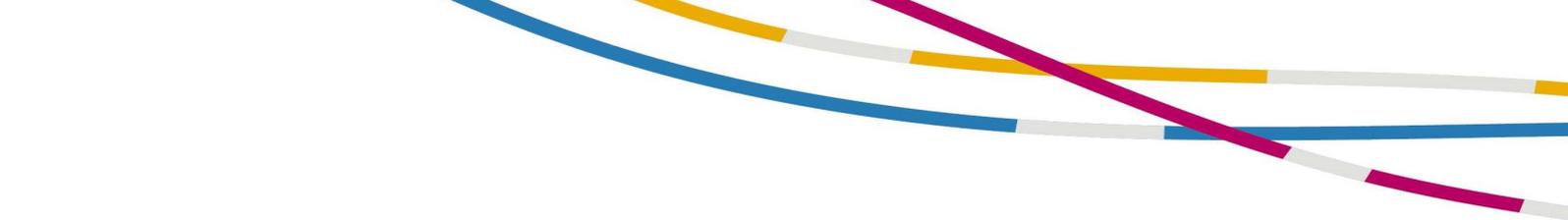
PRISMS website functionality will remain largely unchanged for CRICOS providers who choose to continue manual data entry via the existing web interface or are unable to utilise the modern API platform. PRISMS functions will also remain stable for national regulators and users from other Commonwealth Departments and Agencies.

Implementation plan

The project will commence in July 2022 and will be implemented over a two-year period (2022-2024). The following diagram (**Figure 1**) outlines a high-level implementation plan -

Figure 1 – Implementation Plan





Benefits to providers

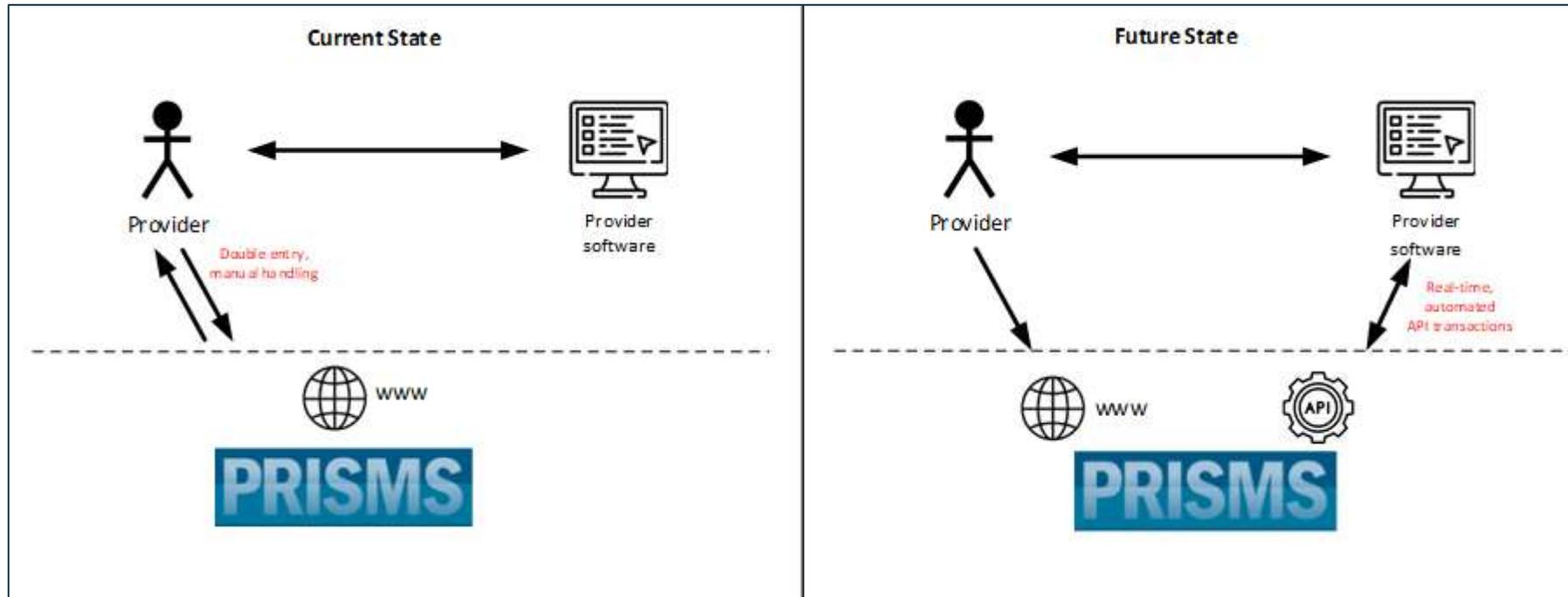
Education providers currently maintain their student management systems and separately manually enter student enrolment details in PRISMS to generate confirmations of enrolment (CoEs) for their visa applications. This creates a significant regulatory burden. This project is an opportunity to provide large-scale/high volume transactional capabilities to providers. The sector has been long requesting system-to-system integration with PRISMS.

The main benefits to providers are -

1. Direct linkage of provider systems with PRISMS will significantly reduce administrative overheads for providers. This will provide an opportunity to focus resources on high value activities of recruitment, student experience and teaching quality. This will be particularly important for the sustainable recovery of the international education sector with the borders now reopened to international students.
2. The API implementation will reduce double data handling for providers, thereby reducing compliance costs and improving overall data quality and business efficiencies.
3. The new capability will improve the timeliness and accuracy of PRISMS data and faster reporting of student enrolment changes, improving regulatory compliance.

The following diagram (**Figure 2**) summarises the current state of provider interactions with PRISMS alongside the desired future state (post the API implementation).

Figure 2 – Current state versus future state





Actions for providers and software vendors

Collaboration across the sector and with Government will be vital for ensuring the success of this project and realising benefits to providers, which is the primary goal of this Government deregulation measure. CRICOS providers and software vendors who elect to take advantage of the API will need to make changes to their enrolment systems and commit time and resources for this project. The Department will provide relevant technical information specific to the providers to assist them in understanding the benefits of secure integration and making timely decisions relevant to this project. Providers and software vendors will also need to be actively engaged in and contribute to the working group discussions supporting the project through delivery throughout the project.

As such, the project will require the following main actions from the education providers and software vendors -

1. Engage with the Department in the project consultation process and implementation. See the [Stakeholder engagement](#) section for details on how to participate in this opportunity.
2. Evaluate and assess the benefits of the project for their organisation to determine cost/benefit propositions.
3. Assess, commit and plan project work and resources required to realise the project's benefits to their organisation.

Stakeholder engagement

Consultations

The Department is committed to working closely with international education stakeholders to achieve a successful PRISMS API solution that supports the longer-term efficiency of the sector. The Department will provide regular communications through newsletters and webinars to keep the sector updated on the project's direction, progress, and outcomes.

From the first quarter of 2022, the Department will engage with CRICOS providers and system software vendors through a series of consultations to discuss the proposed project implementation approach. The consultation process will be developed to drive the project delivery and implementation to 2024. The Department encourages providers and vendors to engage in this process. We will streamline the consultation approach (where possible) with other similar API projects currently running within the Department.

As the first step, the Department is inviting CRICOS providers and software vendors interested in helping to shape the development and delivery of a successful PRISMS data integration solution by -

1. becoming an early adopter of the API solution and completing a **short survey**. The **survey** will be emailed in the first quarter of 2022 to all Principal Executive Officers (PEOs) in PRISMS. This is to assess interest and ability to participate, as well as gather information on current student management systems and software vendors.
2. emailing your contact details to the [PRISMS API Helpdesk \(PRISMSAPI@dese.gov.au\)](mailto:PRISMSAPI@dese.gov.au) if you would like to be involved in the project in any way. The project team will be in contact with further information about engagement opportunities in mid-2022.



Questions

If you have any queries about the content of this brief or the consultation process, please email your request to the [PRISMS API Helpdesk \(PRISMSAPI@dese.gov.au\)](mailto:PRISMSAPI@dese.gov.au).

Next steps

1. CRICOS providers are requested to review the Principal Executive Officer (PEO) contact details on PRISMS and contact their relevant [ESOS Agency](#) for any updates. If the change is only to the email address, the request can be emailed to the [PRISMS Helpdesk \(Prisms@dese.gov.au\)](mailto:Prisms@dese.gov.au). The Department will use this information for all communication related to this project as outlined in the [Stakeholder engagement](#) section.
2. The Department will send a short survey to all PEOs in the first quarter of 2022 to indicate their willingness to participate in this project. Providers are encouraged to complete this survey. The survey responses will assist the department in gathering information on SMS vendors and planning the stakeholder engagement strategy.